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ABSTRACT

Perceived leadership styles of black college presidents at institutions in the southeast and southwest United States were studied. The Cole Leadership Style Questionnaire was administered to the presidents to determine their perceptions regarding their leadership styles, as well as information concerning their age, highest degree earned, and job title and years they had been in their respective positions. It was found that black college presidents' perceptions of leadership were not affected by geographic region; or by public versus private institutional control, institution size, or by the presidents' backgrounds. It is recommended that black college presidents make strong appointments of chief administrative offices and deanships, learn the details of management, understand financial practices, and establish priorities for effective use of the president's time. Recommendations for future research concerning administrators' leadership styles are also offered. (SW)

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A COMPARISON OF PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP STYLES AMONG PRESIDENTS OF SELECTED BLACK COLLEGES IN THE SOUTHWESTERN AND SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES*

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A COMPARISON OF PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP STYLES AMONG PRESIDENTS OF SELECTED BLACK COLLEGES IN THE SOUTHWESTERN AND SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

The many problems facing the leadership of presidents of Black colleges are not entirely dissimilar from those faced by many presidents of predominantly white colleges. Because of the unique historical contexts of Blacks, leaders of Black colleges have been required to approach their problems differently. Black colleges have had a rather distinctive historical development such as the problem posed by continual financial difficulties, academic program deficiencies, and predominantly white-controlled state and local boards who traditionally have presented rather serious obstacles for the leadership of minority colleges.

Other internal and external forces have impinged upon the office of the presidency, causing the leadership role of the modern college president to undergo rather significant modifications since his early predecessors. The emergence of academic collective bargaining, growth in institutional size, complexity and intervention from legislatures and courts have all combined to alter the power of the college president.

Historically, the word "leadership" has been ascribed different meanings by different people. The traditional

viewpoint conceptualized leadership as behavior exhibited by certain individuals possessed with inborn traits or qualities. However, results of studies have revealed a confused picture due to different situational requirements which often dictated leadership effectiveness.

All aspects of the American society are searching for persons who have the ability to manage people and materials for the achievement of desired goals. This shortage of effective leadership is not confined to business, but is evident in the lack of able leaders in government, education, foundations, churches, and every other form of organization. Administration of higher education is authority or power vested in an office or position by the Board of Directors which has governance over a particular institution. The leader or president is an appointed officer who is given the authority to manage an institution for the achievement of its mission. Cooperation and support from faculty, staff, student body, alumni and friends are vital to successful administration. Therefore, competent administration in higher education is greatly dependent upon effective leadership.

The importance placed upon leadership, a determining factor in successful university management has created much interest among educators as well as the business sector.

Early studies by White and Lippett (1966) described three styles of leadership: autocratic, democratic, and

laissez-faire. These styles are traditionally found in the literature as the methods most practical and easily understood in many management situations. Most earlier studies were conducted with emphasis in business. Other studies formulated by Bartky (1956), focused on administration as educational leadership.

Different views exist relative to the effectiveness of certain leadership styles within higher education. Wiles (1967) cited a number of research examples which indicated democratic leadership being more effective than autocratic leadership. Nimnicht (1958) found that a significant correlation existed between success and authoritarian leadership. Additional research revealed leadership styles have varying degrees of success relating to differing leadership methods. No specific leadership style has proved to be superior to other identified styles of administration.

Higher education in America today finds itself in a multi-crisis milieu plagued by inflation and inadequate funding from federal, state and private sources because of the conservative attitude of these agencies toward education. Thus, there is a need for institutions of higher learning to reevaluate their total organization in an effort to achieve their mission more efficiently.

In organizations, the prime consideration is the degree to which goals, no matter what their source, are accomplished.

Goal setting and organizing the University are the beginning steps in accomplishing the objectives necessary for the success of its educational program and students.

The question then becomes centered on the style of leadership that may solicit and encourage the best efforts from others in the organization. Under differing leadership styles, different climated are created and this phenomenon tends to validate and support the idea of the "best leadership style."

Among other approaches to studying leadership, some have focused on followers rather than leaders, others have considered the characteristics of the group being led, and still others have examined the situation in which the leadership occurs. In focusing on "followers," researchers assume that the followers have basic needs and they tend to satisfy those needs. Studies that focus on group characteristics assume that the leader is not free to determine group action but is limited by the needs and norms of the group.

Fielder (1967) studied the relative effectiveness of what he called "task-oriented" leadership style and "relationship-oriented" leadership style. He concluded that the appropriateness of the leadership style for high group performance is dependent on the situation, and that "relationship oriented" leaders tend to be more effective.

It appears that the search for the "best leadership style" would continue to be a fruitless effort. With success

in leadership being affected by so many variables, each with its own set of subscribers, perhaps Ginsberg (1966) best sums up the situation when he concludes:

> If we really understood what made Napoleon and Hitler tick, we would come close to unraveling the major tangle of the leadership program. However, we would still be faced with the question of whether Napoleon accomplished what he did because the time was ripe or because he was Napoleon. (p. 111)

One of the most elusive principles in the study of human interaction has been perception. Not only has it been defined in different ways but the process has also been called person perception, interpersonal perception, impression for motion, and the ability to judge people, each of which increased the elusiveness of the subject. Tagiuri and Petrullo (1949) proposed using the term person perception whenever the perceiver regards the object as having the potential of representation and intentionality, in order to behave appropriately. These authors felt the need to assess a person's traits, intentions, feelings, attitudes, capacities, role-related behavior, and the situation in which the behavior occurs. It can be readily seen that many factors influence perception, giving more credibility to the conclusions that perception is truly an individualized process. Based upon the related literature, an individual's perception of himself can be affected by many variables.

Leadership roles are complex. Leaders need both personal talent and the ability to create an atmosphere in which people

flourish. The success depends on the people with whom they deal and on the type of environment in which they work. Therefore, this study addresses the following issues:

1. Do Black college presidents perceive themselves as having particular leadership styles?
2. Does location, size, or type of college affect leadership styles?
3. Is the style of leadership significantly affected by the leader's educational level, area of specialization, highest degree earned, or tenure status?

The purpose of this investigation was to determine the perceived leadership styles of Black college presidents.

Historically, Black colleges are institutions that were founded primarily for Black Americans although their charters were, in most instances, not exclusionary. These are institutions serving or identified with service to Black Americans for at least two decades, with most being fifty to one hundred years old.

Although there are important ideological and political differences between colleges founded to serve Blacks and those founded to serve white ethnic and religious minorities, Black colleges today face many of the same dilemmas as the white institutions.

The Adams Mandate decree which orders equal facilities, integrated faculties and student bodies, additional funding

for upgrading the faculty, facilities and physical plant, is mandatory for institutions of higher education for accomplishing their mission. This enrichment of academic programs at Black colleges may be an effort in providing Blacks an avenue into a racially integrated, national society, but the success of this mandate ie yet to be realized.

The general hypothesis tested in this investigation is:

> There is no significant difference between the perceived leadership styles among selected Black college presidents in the southeastern and southwestern states as affected by: age, geographical location, institutional type, general educational discipline, tenure status, size of college, level of programs, highest degree earned by Black college presidents, and total years of experience.

Black college presidents comprised the population of this study. The population of this investigation consisted of Black college presidents located in the southeastern and southwestern United States. The sample used was the available population of Black college presidents because this population was small. A survey instrument was developed especially for this study and was sent to each college president. A cover letter accompanied the questionnaire.

The survey instrument asked the presidents to give their perceptions regarding their leadership styles. Other demographic data were asked for in the instrument. This included

age, highest degree earned, job title and years they had been in their respective positions. Statistical tests were administered to this data in order to determine relationships and differences in response to perceived leadership styles, and other subject areas under study such as size of the institution, private vs. public institutions, and location.

The National Advisory Committee on Black Higher Education and Black Colleges and Universities was selected as a research source to identify the population of Black colleges since it concerns itself only with Black colleges and universities in higher education.

In order to collect the data, a questionnaire was developed by this investigator. The questionnaire, Cole Leadership Style Questionnaire (CLSQ) was designed to initiate response to the question of how the chief administrative officer perceived his style of leadership.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections, general information and perceptions of leadership styles. In section one, questions 1-11 dealt with general information and question 12 referred to the types of leadership styles. In section two, questions 13-40 covered perceptions of leadership.

A panel of judges consisting of eight vice presidents was used for their expert judgment to assess the content validity of the questions presented. These experts carefully examined all the items on the CLSQ and presented their

concerns as to how well the items represented the intended content area.

A letter with enclosures (CLSQ) was sent to each of the presidents representing this sample population. The letter to the presidents explained the general purpose of the study. The enclosures included the CLSQ, instructions for the respondent, and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

Approximately two weeks after the initial mailing of the questionnaire, a follow-up letter was sent to the presidents of those institutions from which no questionnaire had been returned. The follow-up letter requested that the questionnaire be returned as soon as possible in order to add credibility to the study. A total of fifty-four instruments were completed and returned representing a sixty-five percent return.

In order to analyze the data the Chi Square Statistical Test and the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were utilized.

The ANOVA was used in order to analyze the data in Part II of the CLSQ which consisted of parametric data. This test was used to determine where there was a significant difference between two or more means at the selected probability level.

All hypotheses tested in this investigation in the null form were accepted, suggesting there was no significant difference in the variable tested, except hypothesis number eleven which states: There is no significant difference in the perceived leadership styles of Black college presidents

at private and public institutions in the southwestern and southeastern United States. The hypothesis was rejected at the probability level of .05.

Based upon the findings of this investigation, the following conclusions are made:

(1) Black college presidents' perception of leadership was not affected by region.

(2) Type college, private or public, had no effect on Black college presidents' perception of leadership.

(3) Black college presidents' leadership perception was not affected by college setting, urban or rural.

(4) The level of instruction at Black colleges did not affect the perceived leadership styles among Black college presidents.

(5) Age range among Black college presidents was not affected by their leadership style perceptions.

(6) Years of experience among Black college presidents did not affect their perceptions of leadership.

(7) The number of years Black college presidents served in their present position was not affected by their perceived leadership styles.

(8) Highest degree earned was not affected by Black college presidents' leadership style perceptions.

(9) Academic area of specialization was not affected by the leadership style perceptions of Black college presidents.

(10) College size was not affected by perceived leadership style of Black college presidents.

The style of leadership has been recognized as a vital factor in the management of any organization, therefore, the following recommendations are made for future studies in this area:

1. Further study should be conducted to ascertain college deans' perception of their chief administrator.

2. Further study should be conducted to ascertain perception of leadership styles among department chairmen, deans and chief administrators.

3. A longitudinal study should be conducted to determine if changes occur in administrative leadership perceptions within the same population.

4. Interdisciplinary efforts be made in determining differences in self concept and demonstrated leadership style.

If Black College Presidents are to successfully survive the eighties and nineties, the following points of recommendation should be considered:

1. Make strong appointments of Chief Administrative Offices and to deanships.
2. Learn the details of all management aspects including the precise financial situation at their University.
3. Develop a high intuition for finances.
4. Establish priorities for your agendas for making effective use of the President's time and energy.

5. Value and trust your administrators and faculties.
6. Become an expert of the enterprise over which you preside.

Effective presidential leadership is vital to the survival of the university, especially in achieving accountability, projecting good management skills, and working effectively with people.

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